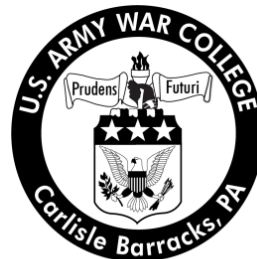


Combined Arms Maneuver, Wide Area Security, and Dynamic Capabilities

by

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United States Army



United States Army War College
Class of 2012

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COMBINED ARMS MANEUVER, WIDE AREA SECURITY, AND DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

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The military commitments of the United States in Afghanistan and Iraq are ending. The present economic and political challenges have left the defense department with a significantly reduced budget. The reduction in spending impacts the three pillars of strategic execution: personnel, doctrine, and materiel. With reduced resources for critical training and acquisitions, the “billpayer” must be an increase in the level of acceptable risk that our country is willing to carry. To mitigate these risks, the Army has chosen to conduct Combined Arms Maneuver (CAM) and Wide Area Security (WAS) core competencies. This paper considers the Army's decision to simultaneously execute both responsibilities, and proposes a novel framework for considering operational risk. These commitments reflect a static view of strategic risk and capabilities that is at best anachronistic, at worst a path to nowhere. The reduction in funding, manning and training resources will not allow the Army to do both efficiently. This paper proposes that instead of seeking a certain level of competence in discrete, strategic capabilities, the Army needs to build and to leverage its dynamic capabilities—in essence, build its ability to rapidly develop capabilities that match emergent strategic needs.

COMBINED ARMS MANEUVER, WIDE AREA SECURITY, AND DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

On January 5, 2012, President Obama, Secretary of Defense Panetta and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Dempsey, unveiled new strategic defense guidance: "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense." The guidance describes the future force as smaller ground forces with greater flexibility and agility, and leaner in financial resources. Technologically, the force will be advanced, and all services will be networked. This future military will be able to mobilize and regenerate for the unknown future while preserving our national industrial base and will be led by a volunteer force led by combat veterans amongst the officers and NCOs.¹ In light of the resource context in which these remarks were delivered, this was a remarkably ambitious and optimistic statement about the future of the U.S. military.

The release by senior leadership of this new defense strategic guidance contains a host of challenges for each of the services. The decrease in defense budgets, reductions in personnel end strength, and challenges to maintain force modernization, coupled with mission focused requirements will complicate decisions. The U.S. Army concluded military operations within Iraq in December, 2011. The Army remains committed to operations in Afghanistan through 2014, focused on counter insurgency and nation building operations. Simultaneously, the Army is trying to develop the future Operational Environment (OE), full of uncertainty and complexity has decided to retain the ability to conduct full spectrum operations, through decisive action.²

Based on current and projected budget cuts to defense spending, reductions in resources will impact the Army's ability to man, equip, modernize, and train the force.

An unwritten element of the code of the professional military is that we do the best we can with what we are given. Yet at some point, even for the most creative and adaptive organizations, “financial gravity” takes hold. You cannot fire rounds you do not have; you cannot send officers to courses that don’t exist; you cannot drive vehicles that were not built. “Doing more with less” becomes “Doing the same with less” and, eventually, “Doing less with less.” This paper does not claim to know where those inflection points occur. But it does explore how our current orientation towards future strategic preparedness (which right now is summarized as “doing the same with less”) may be misleading and potentially destructive to the force.

Looking to a future OE characterized by increasing uncertainty, rapid change, and a wide variety of adversaries, the Army must evaluate the risk associated with its future mission requirements. Since World War II (WWII), the evolution of the strategic posture of the military can be described as a series of decisions as to what we will and will not do. In a sense, the recent statements of senior military leaders and new strategic documents fit neatly into the post-WWII tradition of the “wills” and “won’ts” of American military strategy. This evaluation is based on available and projected resources, defined strategy, and current and potential adversaries.³ The military surveys the environment, identifies likely strategic needs and risks, and seeks the capabilities that match those needs and risks.

Yet we have an equally consistent tradition of following up such assertions with deployments in contingency operations that almost always fall into the “won’t” category. In a speech at West Point, then-Secretary of Defense Robert Gates summed this up nicely:

Just think about the range of security challenges we face right now beyond Iraq and Afghanistan: terrorism and terrorists in search of weapons of mass destruction, Iran, North Korea, military modernization programs in Russia and China, failed and failing states, revolution in the Middle East, cyber, piracy, proliferation, natural and man-made disasters, and more. And I must tell you, when it comes to predicting the nature and location of our next military engagements, since Vietnam, our record has been perfect. We have never once gotten it right, from the Mayaguez to Grenada, Panama, Somalia, the Balkans, Haiti, Kuwait, Iraq, and more – we had no idea a year before any of these missions that we would be so engaged.⁴

(We could add Korea to that list—and Vietnam, as well, if we push out the year anticipation.) Yet the idea that “we have never once gotten it right” is not reflected in our approach to future capabilities. We continue to try to define the future and develop capabilities to match the future we envision. This approach is “Static Capability-Seeking.” It has not worked for us in the past, and everything about the current and emerging environment suggests that it will not work any better in the future. Why do we continue to do it? This paper suggests that this ongoing error is rooted in a fundamentally flawed approach to risk—our calculus is distorted by availability and confirmation biases, and by a focus on the worst-case scenario.

Some fundamental truths regarding the strategic environment suggest that static capability-seeking is not the optimal approach. First, despite our best efforts to define away certain responsibilities, civilian leaders determine what missions are worth American blood and treasure. The military advises, but the political leaders decide. Second, the U.S. military does not choose its wars. As we like to put it, “the enemy has a vote.” Indeed, the enemy, being a generally astute species (Saddam Hussein excepted), is likely to choose fights in which he has a chance of success. He will be more confident to risk conflict with the U.S. when he knows the U.S. is reluctant to commit forces, or when U.S. doctrine and training is a poor fit for the conflict

environment. Third, history suggests that it is not merely possible that the military will be required to fight a war for which it is ill-prepared, it is *likely*, for the two reasons mentioned above. Static capability-seeking, far from preparing us for conflict, is part of the calculus that creates the conditions for contingency conflicts.

Recognizing these facts, this paper proposes a dynamic approach to building capabilities in the Army: dynamic capability-seeking. Dynamic capabilities are the organizational ability to develop new capabilities effectively and quickly. Instead of relying upon a non-existent certainty in the future, dynamic capability-seeking rests on an acceptance of the fundamental uncertainty of the future strategic environment. It orients organizational resources toward building the capability to learn, to adapt, and rapidly to develop and field materiel. It also requires the ability to scale rapidly certain key, static capabilities that must be retained. (For example, certain large acquisitions programs must be maintained at minimum levels of production to allow continuing improvements and provide a basis for future, contingent expansion.)

The following section reviews the static capability-seeking concept of strategy. By reviewing one prominent debate in the conventional approach to strategic capabilities Combined Arms Maneuver (CAM) vs. Wide Area Security (WAS), it seeks to illustrate the fundamental weaknesses of this approach. Then it examines the potential for a different strategic orientation: dynamic capability-seeking. This rests on mutually supporting investments in training, doctrine, and a more nimble acquisitions system.

Static Capabilities: Combined Arms Maneuver and Wide Area Security

The Army has defined Decisive Action through the application of CAM and WAS as the core competencies necessary to achieve this goal.⁵ The Army's defines CAM and WAS as follows:

CAM is the application of the elements of combat power in a complimentary and reinforcing manner to achieve physical, temporal or psychological advantages over the enemy, preserve freedom of action and exploit success.

WAS is the application of the elements of combat power in coordination with other military and civilian capabilities to develop the situation through action, gain or maintain contact with the enemy, and to deny the enemy positions of advantage. The intent is to protect forces, populations, infrastructure, activities and consolidate tactical operations gains to set conditions for achieving strategic and political goals.⁶

The Army articulates within its unified land operations document the ability to conduct decisive actions, through offense, defense, stability and Direct Support Civilian Authority (DSCA) relying on CAM and WAS. Given the budgetary constraints and associated resource reductions facing the Army, is it realistic to expect it to maintain equal proficiency in both core competencies? Given the current and projected future constraints, can the Army do everything simultaneously? It is not at all clear. Obviously, the desire to be good at both reflects some fundamental uncertainty about future requirements. Given the choice between being good at A and being good at B, we choose being good at both. But the Army's history (as mentioned above) and research on how people conceptualize risk both suggest that the Army is likely to fail in this effort. If there is no clearly stated prioritization to direct the focus of the limited resources, the Army will default to one core competency over the other. This results from problems with the way we (human beings) tend to think about risk, to which we now turn.

Biases - Risk Assessment and Strategy. Two views mark the current debate on the Army's strategy regarding CAM and WAS. The first can be summarized as follows: CAM should be the primary focus to defeat an adversarial nation state and if required the Army can easily scale down to conduct WAS operations. The second states that the Army's focus should be WAS irregular warfare because no state is likely to engage us in

a conventional, large-scale conflict. Interestingly, both arguments draw on the experience of the U.S. Army in post-WWII conflict to support their views. And both suffer from similar shortcomings in terms of their calculus of risk. Two problems are particularly salient. First, we do not know how much the future will resemble the past, though recent experience suggests that it may resemble it very much in one respect—its lack of predictability. Second, we are not very good (as mentioned by Secretary Gates) at predicting what future conflicts we will fight. The perceptions on both sides of this debate have been influential in the development of military strategy. Those who advance these views are well-intentioned, but they are limited by how they view risk.

The Army defines risk as a manifestation of a possible loss or negative impact that can be stated in terms of probability and severity or actions that otherwise impacts mission effectiveness.⁷ If the assessment of risk is strictly evaluated in terms of the likelihood of an event occurring against the judged consequence, this approach is subjective in assessment rather than quantifiable. There are other variables in gauging risk that leaders must consider when evaluating probability, availability, and the cost of loss. To evaluate risk the Army needs to be cognizant of a variety of humanistic, cultural and psychological biases that will distort risk assessment. We focus on three: confirmation, availability, and affect biases. They distort how we receive, process, and analyze context to create an assessment of risk.

Psychologists have identified two modes of thinking that frame biases; an automatic system and an effortful system. The first system operates automatically and rapidly with minimal control. Examples are judging the distance of two objects, detecting emotional state (happy, sad, mad) looking at a person's face or driving a vehicle on an

empty road. The effortful system forces attention on mental activities that include computation, or an experience that requires choice and concentration. Examples of the effortful system are monitoring personal behavior in social settings, assessing the validity of a complex logical argument, and completing a student loan form.⁸ The effortful system requires attention and is disrupted when your attention is shifted away for any portion of time on another target. The automatic system is constantly feeding data and suggestions to the effortful system, such as impressions, intuitions, intentions and feelings. Once the effortful system has received this input, if it accepts them, then those intuitions and impressions convert into beliefs and can further develop into voluntary actions.⁹

In some instances, issues arise with the automatic system, possessing little capability for logic and statistics, cannot be disengaged. These actions can cause the effortful system to generate errors based on an inability to identify the available error.¹⁰ These two systems interaction with confirmation, availability, and affect (or worst-case scenario analysis) biases can effectively blind people based on their intensity even when other events are present, and directly affect risk assessment.

Confirmation Bias. Any assessment of risk must be wary of confirmation bias when formulating a decision. Confirmation bias causes us to seek supportive data, arguments, or scenarios to use as confirming evidence which can be explained as a positive test strategy. The belief in a system or sympathy for a particular concept can cause us to act upon it even when it is not valid, or the opposite, dismiss everything else. If one gathers enough data in support for a particular case, the probability of occurrence in that person or groups minds becomes greater. The probability to

overestimate the event's occurrence, impact, or cost will also become greater.¹¹

Confirmation bias will also close off other options in visualizing and describing the future. This bias can also close off thinking about potential adversaries, their capabilities and increase risk. This bias can also influence the allocated resources believed necessary to fight a depicted strategy.

Confirmation bias is a theory in search of confirming evidence, and/or a willful ignorance of disconfirming data. Human beings are remarkably capable of blinding themselves to information that challenges their preconceptions. Some of the great catastrophes of military history illustrate the power of this bias. In 9 Common Era, the Roman commander Publius Quinctilius Varus led three legions to utter destruction in the Teutoburg forest. There were rampant rumors of a general uprising of the Germanic tribes of the region, yet Varus allowed himself to be deceived and betrayed by a native advisor (Arminius of the Cherusci, who had trained as a Roman commander and was a Roman citizen).¹² Varus led his men into a position of terrible vulnerability, on unfamiliar ground, because his understanding of the information he received was shaped by a deeply rooted idea: no man familiar with Rome and Roman civilization would turn his back on it. Arminius would not betray him; therefore, all of the conflicting reports must be wrong.

Confirmation bias is hardly a new concept. We tend to find what we seek, and we don't find what we don't seek. Yet it has particular power in the conceptualizing of military strategy and risk. We shall return to this below.

Availability Bias. Availability bias affects decisions based on the process by which we make judgments. In estimating the size or frequency of an outcome, the ease

with which you envision that outcome affects judgment and intuition.¹³ Some influencing factors of availability are important similar events, a dramatic event near the time of decision, or personal experiences relevant to the outcome. Availability bias distorts our perception of the magnitude and/or frequency of an outcome; it can result in either an exaggeration or an understatement of risk.¹⁴ Availability bias is similar to confirmation bias, except in this case the *evidence* leads the hypothesis, often to exclusion of other, less readily-recalled pieces of data. The hypothesis is biased because evidence behind it is over-emphasized or under-weighted.

The military tendency to “fight the last war” is an example of how availability bias operates at the strategic level. The U.S.’s execution of regime change in Iraq in 2003 reflected high competence in combined arms warfare, building on the military’s success in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. Yet in many ways the scale of that earlier success blinded military and political policy-makers to the ways in which the liberation of Kuwait differed from the overthrow of Saddam Hussein’s sadistic regime. Risk analysis for Operation Iraqi Freedom focused on the casualties and cost associated with the early phases of the campaign (19 March - 1 May, 2003, major combat operations in Iraq), and assumed that this stage of the war would carry the highest cost. After all, that had been our experience in Desert Storm. Desert Storm was the most relevant “available” piece of data we had, and it lulled the U.S. government and military into a damaging sense of complacency. During major combat operations in Iraq, 139 U.S. military service members were killed, and 551 wounded. During the subsequent, prolonged stability and nation building operations, 4,345 U.S. military service members were killed and 33,186 wounded. The war cost billions more than anticipated.¹⁵ Desert

Storm offered a particularly dangerous case of availability bias because of its recentness (such that most of the senior U.S. commanders in Operation Iraqi Freedom had been involved in Desert Storm), that it featured the same antagonist, and the U.S. had few recent experiences of a different type of war—one in which the U.S.’s self-anointed role of liberator would not be so readily accepted by the liberated.

Availability bias, like confirmation bias, is a particular danger in conceptualizing the risks of military strategy. Wars are neither numerous nor frequent enough to provide strategists with anything resembling a “representative sample” of strategic possibilities. The less evidence we have, the greater the likelihood that the evidence we draw upon to shape our theories and expectations for future conflict will *not* fit the threat that actually emerges.

Affect Bias, or Worst-Case Analysis. The final bias we explore is affect bias, which is the distortion in judgment created by the organization or leader’s protective actions in response to the risk of the worst case or highest cost outcome. The inclination to forecast the worst case scenario and the associated risk, coupled with a negative emotional reaction to the outcomes will heighten or exacerbate the affect. This will, when connected to different scenarios or OEs, create an improbably high negative reference between the worst case and various alternatives. This imbalance changes the risk calculus and influences the final decision. The decision, therefore, will be driven by the inference that the cost is high even if the probability is very low.¹⁶

In the discussion below, we return to how worst case forecasting may distort the current strategic debate. We do not suggest that such analysis should not be a part of strategic decision-making. Yet worst-case analysis without sufficient regard to

probability will cripple an organization's broader capabilities. A U.S. military solely geared to winning an all-out war with China will, due to resource constraints, have no latitude for developing capabilities necessary in the more likely event of, say, stability operations in Africa.

The ability of an organization to assess more accurately probability, availability, and affect are critical components of evaluating risk. This evaluation of risk will influence decisions made in priorities, resources, proficiency and Army core competencies. The organization must be aware of biases or heuristic tendencies that can further influence the decision making process by affecting intuition, judgment and emotion. The current approach is inherently flawed, and these biases allow knowledgeable people to make mistakes in calculating risk assessment.

Assumptions of Static Capability-Seeking. The new Department of Defense (DoD) strategic defense guidance and strategy direct the Army's core competencies and capabilities. All strategy requires assumptions. The difficulty resides in getting the assumption right or eliminating as much of an error as possible and then making the decision. The assumptions used in refining military strategy influence the Army's structure, manning and modernization to achieve objectives based on available and potential resources allocated against required priorities.

Debate on Army Capabilities: Biases at Work. Four key assumptions underlie the current strategic debate. First, the military does not choose its conflicts; for example, the need to pursue both CAM and WAS capabilities is justified by a fundamental uncertainty regarding future mission requirements. Second, the military can learn quickly; it will acquire new capabilities through organizational adaptation. Third, the reduced resource

environment requires some decisions now regarding investment in future capabilities; we do not have the resources to be good at everything, so we must choose what to be good at now, and what to learn later, if necessary. Fourth, the nation will resource the military's required capabilities to achieve the directed strategy; strategy drives resources. Each of these assumptions is evident in the latest U.S. strategic doctrine. Yet in some cases, they are at odds with each other. For example, the stated desire for multiple capabilities (because of assumption 1) conflicts with the organization's tendency to commit to a narrow set of capabilities (assumption 3). Furthermore, current senior leader statements and strategic documents suggest that some assumptions carry more weight than others. Finally, some ideas are taken for granted. For example, the military *has* demonstrated its ability to learn and adapt. But to do so quickly, for example, requires significant organizational investment; otherwise, learning occurs at great cost. Furthermore, the aforementioned biases of confirmation, availability, and affect operate on these assumptions in different ways. The following discussion links these biases and strategic assumptions in examining the challenges of American military strategy in the post Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO), sequestration era.

The central question in the current strategic debate is which capabilities the Army should seek. One argument states that the Army's focus must be on conventional fighting, because it cannot rapidly acquire these required capabilities, but can easily shift to less intensive operations like counterinsurgency. One author, Colonel (COL) Gian P. Gentile, has stressed the need for a more conventional structured force, capable of fighting at the higher spectrum of war, in what the Army calls CAM. He

asserts that the Army should be organized for war and its fundamental principle, fighting. Acknowledging the uncertainty of future combat requirements, and the likelihood of reduced resources, the Army will not be able to create an effective fighting force that is equally prepared for all contingencies. The Army, COL Gentile argues, must prioritize and make difficult decisions regarding equipment, training and mission capabilities.¹⁷ To this end, he argues that the capability that the Army cannot ignore or under-resource is constructed around the fundamental principles for protection, mobility, firepower, organized and trained centered on being a fighting force (CAM operations). The Army should incorporate a focus on capabilities to fight and defeat the strongest state threats that exist. If the Army chooses otherwise, the risk, and consequences may result in strategic catastrophe.¹⁸

Another author that echoes this argument is Dr. Collin Gray. He argues that war (and by war, he means big war) is a human condition and civilization will not see the conclusion of warfare in the 21st century. Warfare is, at its center, fighting—both regular and irregular styles. Given that both types will occur, the U.S. military should spend its energy and resources focused on inter-state war fighting capabilities as its first priority.¹⁹ The future conflicts the U.S. will be engaged in will carry a variety of unknowns. To have a capability that can react to and overcome that uncertainty must, be robust.²⁰ The Army, as part of the military strategy, must initially deter, and if required, defeat any nation state or combination of nations that endanger our regional interests. The Army would do this by creating, and maintaining our preeminence in conventional combat, now categorized by the Army as CAM.²¹ Gentile and Grey both maintain that the Army

must return to more primary conventional war fighting capabilities regarding Combined Arms Maneuver.

Both COL Gentile and Dr. Grey build their arguments around the four assumptions described above. The strength of their argument is the degree to which it acknowledges the fundamental uncertainty of future conflict (assumption 1). Yet where they go from this solid ground says a great deal about the shortcomings of American strategic thought. The next assumption is that the Army can easily learn and adapt to lesser conflicts if required. While both COL Gentile and Dr. Gray consider counter insurgency, nation building and similar operations as probable in the future, they argue that these require limited investment in static capabilities, and can be learned on demand. Gentile and Grey both assert that a conventional force is easily capable of transitioning to less intensive operations and can easily learn what is necessary to succeed. In the discussion of biases, we reviewed availability bias. Gentile and Grey both demonstrate it in their reasoning. The justification for a strong commitment to CAM is the ability to rapidly develop and scale WAS capabilities. The success of the surge in Iraq is a recent, salient example of this. But what exactly did Iraq teach us about the military's ability to learn? Is the primary lesson that the military (and the Army, in particular) can learn and adapt rapidly? By most account it took about three years, tens of thousands of casualties, and an astonishing exertion of political will by the President of the U.S., for the military to begin to engage in the type of operations that created relative stability in Iraq. That hardly seems like a model for future operations.

Yet one may contend that the military did eventually learn, and the learning itself is a positive model. This is fair. But what will a stronger focus on conventional

capabilities do to this learning ability? The assumption of easily learning and transitioning to WAS capabilities is a misleading notion. The capabilities required are complicated by the context of the environment. Aspects of cultural, religious, ethnic, and tribal dynamics need to be learned, understood and applied. Organizational leadership at the junior level needs to possess an ability to negotiate, solve disputes, support rule of law and help establish temporary local governance or support existing local governance. These characteristics are not taught, learned and reinforced when organizing and training for conventional operations. The Army did not have this capability in 2001-2003, and organizations experienced adverse affects of this shortcoming as units rotated in and out of the OE. Military experiences show that a well-planned, integrated approach for counterinsurgency operations was not fully implemented until 2007; Afghanistan mirrors the same challenges and extended learning curve.²²

The affect (worst-case) bias also colors Gentile's and Grey's analyses. Without strong overwhelming conventional capabilities in a future environment, they argue, the Army will suffer catastrophic consequences. This discussion is based on a worst case belief, where extreme events have very high consequences and outcomes are often judged to exceed the perceived scenario. If this affect becomes the dominate paradigm regarding future military action, it limits our ability to see more than one significant threat. Emotional connection to the outcome will directly impact decisions and priorities from the associated fear. Additionally, the uncertainty of the worst case scenario can influence public opinion and direct political decisions through loss aversion even when there is less probability of the event.

Finally, both Gentile and Grey argue that reduced focus on conventional capabilities limits the Army's ability to fight. COL Gentile addresses the possibility of a Brigade Combat Team trained for counterinsurgency and stability operations (WAS) with the mission of peacekeeping, deployed to an OE which deteriorates into intense counterinsurgency. He asserts that this organization would be unprepared and greatly disadvantaged, experiencing a high degree of loss based on not being ready to fight.²³

Yet the past decade has demonstrated just such a dual capability in the force. As the Army and the Marine Corps slowly shifted to a focus on WAS in both Iraq and Afghanistan, they periodically were also called upon to engage in intense fighting over the past decade. The second Battle of Fallujah, a joint Iraqi, U.S. Marines, and British operation resulted in some of the heaviest urban fighting during the Iraq war. The military units' ability to focus on war fighting capabilities within an urban environment after operations had shifted to counter insurgency and stability operations, displays that fighting abilities had not atrophied.²⁴ Operation Baton Rouge (The battle for Samarra) at the beginning of October 2004 conducted by 1st Infantry Division and elements of the Iraqi Army demonstrated significant fighting combining light and mechanized infantry with armor and other combat enablers. This required the use of fire and maneuver, inherent with close fighting capabilities in Army organizations to achieve victory.²⁵ Additional examples are the 10th Mountain Basic Combat Training's (BCT) actions south of Baghdad within "The Triangle of Death" in 2007-2009,²⁶ and the U.S. Marines and British experiences in Helmand Province, Afghanistan during 2009-2010, further illustrate that operations in a counter insurgency or stability operations do not eliminate the Army's organizational ability to fight.²⁷

These experiences demonstrate that when squad through battalion level operations are trained in *multiple* competencies, they are better prepared for all contingencies. Yet without preparation, we cannot expect learning. OCO has taught us that learning is itself an organizational capability. It requires significant investment, organizational commitment of time and effort, and continuous assessment of personnel, materiel, and doctrine.

It is worth making a final observation regarding the Gentile/Grey perspective, which appears to be the dominant framework guiding current Army strategic thought. Recently the military released strategic defense guidance (5 January 2012), stating the end of long-term nation-building with medium to large military footprints, as seen in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is tempting for the military to consider the past ten years of conflict and say, “No thank you. We’re not doing that again.” How easily we forget assumption 1: we do not choose our conflicts. The question we must ask, therefore, is how likely we are to engage in similar operations in the future? In the long list of likely adversaries in the 21st century, non-state international actors such as terrorists and criminal cartels, paramilitary groups and insurgencies in failed states, and other unconventional threats are among the more likely catalysts for future combat operations. What does this mean? It means that the Army is embracing a strategic perspective that places the organization at greater risk of operational failure. Our commitment to CAM, in the absence of a stronger commitment to organizational *dynamic* capabilities (more on this below), is not going to result in a nimble, adaptive force. It will result in a force that has great difficulty adapting to the requirements of the combat environments to which it is most likely to be deployed.

Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) John A. Nagl offers a different opinion on the Army's focus from Gray and Gentile. To some extent, Nagl rejects the assumption that the military can learn and adapt. His premise is that the Army must create an organizational structure based on current evolving tactics and future OEs. The Army must not rebuild its capabilities exclusively around combined arms maneuver for the sole purpose of achieving decisive operations and tactical victories within the future environment.²⁸ The adversaries that we have faced and those that observed our military's actions over the past 10 years in Iraq and Afghanistan have learned both the military's effectiveness and weak points. Future adversaries are more likely to avoid our strengths in conventional capabilities and look to improve on more established asymmetric options. The Army's struggle after the fall of Baghdad in March 2003 demonstrated the lack of preparedness in fully adapting to the requirement of the growing counter insurgency. This deficiency in both doctrinal knowledge and training created a gap in the Army's ability to react and lead to incremental attempts to solve the obstacles the Army was confronting.²⁹

Nagl fails to recognize that the American experience in Iraq and Afghanistan is more complex than this. Confirmation bias afflicts his thinking. His hypothesis is that the military does not learn, and he cherry-picks evidence to support that conclusion. From that uncertain foundation, he then argues that every potential adversary observing the U.S. military over the past two decades has ruled out engagement in conventional warfare. Because conventional war is no longer an option for our adversaries, and given the tremendous investment required to be proficient at WAS, Nagl therefore argues that the modern U.S. military should shift its focus to seeking static capabilities in such operations. The failure of this logic is apparent. Nagl argues that potential adversaries

are giving up on conventional resistance because of the U.S.'s conventional capabilities (a heavy force in CAM). Yet if the U.S. were to abandon those capabilities, what would our adversaries do? It also ignores Korea, where the U.S. has for six decades faced a real threat of conventional war. It also marginalizes the initial phases in both Iraq and Afghanistan, conflicts that required more conventional capabilities *to establish an environment in which WAS could occur*.

This assumption is also the worst case fallacy by which it portrays the Army as incapable of learning and adaption to adversarial threats and only by committing to structural change for asymmetrical operations creates success. The Army did learn to understand the context of the OCO conflicts, and created a wide variety of organizations to affect specific requirements. The Army and the Marine Corps created embedded military, and police training teams, cultural awareness teams, Provincial Reconstruction Teams, Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) defeat systems and enhanced Informational Operations. These adaptations were directly related to learning about the changing environment military units operated within. While the timeliness of adaptation and resource allocation could have been improved, the required learning to achieve success and adaptation by the Army and the Marine Corps did occur.

Additionally, Nagl states that we choose certain types of Military operations and remain fixated on conventional capabilities. The Army's ability to adapt to the context of the OE is limited, and the military needs to structure organizations to confront future challenges. The future challenges the Army will face are not confined to the composition of the future adversary or resources alone. When analyzing a whole systems belief, the defense institution in some aspects remains severely vested in a practice that continues

to prioritize the required resources and organization necessary for a more conventional nation state conflict.³⁰

Contrary to that view of inflexibility, the U.S. military has adapted to the changing environment repeatedly. Our civilian leaders use the military in a wide variety of situations to achieve strategic objectives. During a significant portion of the past 67 years, the military has evolved through WAS operations and nation building, this experience, started at the conclusion of WWII. The defeat of Germany and Japan were the first experiences with WAS, and the military was used to achieve comprehensive efforts at social, political and economic reestablishment. These actions were also an undertaking to convey and progress democracy in these nations during post conflict settings. These operations occurred between 1945-1952, with the peak of the forces in Germany at 1.6 million soldiers, and within Japan, the high point was 350 thousand soldiers.³¹

During the 1990's, the military was involved in a number of operations beginning with Somalia from 1992-1994, to assist with humanitarian relief efforts. The U.S. troop numbers peaked during operations in Somalia at 28,000 soldiers.³² The Somalia mission was followed over the next 10 years, with missions in Haiti (1994-1995) requiring 21,000 soldiers, Bosnia (1995-2004) 20,000 soldiers, and Kosovo (1999-Present) 15,000 soldiers.³³ Our involvement in Vietnam started through Special Forces counterinsurgency assistance and stabilization operations from December 1960 through June 1965.³⁴ The latest examples of sustained WAS operations are evident in the past 10 plus years in Iraq, and Afghanistan. All of these examples presented similar challenges in terms of security and security force training, humanitarian needs, civil

administration or support of existing agencies, economic challenges and reconstruction.³⁵ These examples also highlight that WAS operations are complex and time consuming, requiring prolonged time, financial resources and military manpower to achieve the desired effect. Additionally, in most instances, the analysis of these operations highlight that the larger military stabilization presence, the lower the troop casualties.³⁶

When called upon, the Army executes the mission asked of it. The past 67 years demonstrate that both CAM and WAS have been required, with a lot more of the latter. The Army does not choose the conflicts it enters because civilian leadership makes those decisions. The military retains flexibility and adaptability to adjust to the OE, the concern is founded in the required time to focus its capabilities correctly.

Before we turn to the discussion of dynamic capabilities, the final strategic assumption—that strategy drives resources—must be addressed. We assume that we will appropriately resource the capabilities the Army needs to execute its mission. Gentile, Grey and Nagl assume are that the nation will resource the strategy decided on to ensure successful implementation. Reviewing current budget reduction impacts on manning, equipping and modernizing Army capabilities suggest a different reality. Strategy drives resources, but the reverse is also true: resources drive strategy. When resources are plentiful, the “tail” of resources is less likely to wag the “dog” of strategy—because the military is able to resource multiple strategies to a higher degree of proficiency. But when resources are constrained, programs are cut, reduced, delayed, etc., and these changes are not always made with reference to specific changes in requirements. Indeed, there is a long list of acquisitions programs that died despite the

continued existence of the requirement that led to the program in the first place. The U.S. faces a decade or more of fiscal tightening. Budget reductions will affect the military's resources, and these changes will have an effect on strategy.

The DoD base budget in Fiscal Year (FY), 2000 was 290.5 billion dollars. The operations in Iraq and Afghanistan had a dramatic impact on the Pentagon's request for war spending (Congressional War Appropriations), in addition to its annual base budget requirements. The base budget projection in a prewar trajectory for FY01-FY11 (for non-conflict DoD expenses) was 4,572 billion dollars. The reported actual amount for this time period totaled 5,238 billion dollars, with increases in non-conflict projected spending of 667 billion dollars during this time period.³⁷

The Budget Control Act in August 2011 directed DoD to cut 450 billion dollars in initial spending. A possible further sequestration reduction of 400-500 billion dollars would occur during the same time period (ten years, commencing with the FY13 budget). The nation's civilian leadership requires all branches of the government to assist in helping to come to terms with the nation's debt and economic crisis. The precedent set in the recent debates and legislation is that the military can expect to take about 50% of any reductions in discretionary Federal spending.

Therefore, we can expect that the Army and other military services will operate within reduced budgets over the coming years. The DoD may see additional sequestration reductions in FY13 in the Departments overall budget. The current budget debate will have a significant impact on the military's ability to execute its stated mission in support of the National Military Strategy. The cost of maintaining an Army's capabilities has become an autonomous influencer that directly affects what the

institution can, and, cannot do. The Army will need to make tough choices within its reduced budget, balancing an acceptable manning level, refining its priorities for modernization, training opportunities, and supporting Soldiers and families. This will affect the Army's ability to conduct both core competencies (CAM and WAS) at the same level of proficiency.

The Army will need to access where the funds will be spent within its existing Budget Authority (BA) of 143.2 billion dollars starting in FY12 (excluding OCO costs) through FY20 to best manage the decade long budget reductions.³⁸ The associated reduction of capabilities and an increased extension in the acquisition process will dictate hard fundamental decisions within the Army. The main expenditures for the Army budget reside in four major categories military personnel, operations and maintenance, procurement and research, development test and evaluation (RTDE). When viewed against the overall BA of 143.2 billion dollars these four categories account for 132.3 billion dollars, approximately 91% of the total. These categories further broken down are 55.6 billion for military civilians, contractors, military family members support (38%), 44.8 billion for operation and maintenance (31%), and procurement combined with RDTE at 31.9 billion (22%).³⁹ Additionally, Military personnel pay is funded under Military Personnel Appropriations (MILPERS) funding, which for FY12 will total 65.5 billion dollars.⁴⁰ DoD stated that they will avoid a hollow force and focus on a smaller ground force fully prepared to fight and execute its mission, while preserving the industrial base. The places where the Army has the most flexibility to absorb these possible future sequestration reductions are 1) personnel manning levels, 2) maintaining equipment and training, and 3) acquisitions.

The budget reduction will impact the manpower force structure of the Army. The Army's current active operational strength is approximately 570,000 soldiers. The monetary funding for military personnel pay coupled with civilian and contractor pay accounts for about 121 billion dollars, approx 58%, of the total 208 billion requested.⁴¹ Support of the manpower portion of this budget is appropriated to areas such as health care, military pay, housing allotment, childcare, family services, retention and manning initiatives to illustrate just a few of the categories.⁴² The worst case reduction to the Army budget would average 12-16 billion dollars per year for the next 10 years. A decision from former Secretary Gates to improve efficiencies started the reduction in personnel. Part of the savings with the Army budget focused on civilian and military manning level, reducing retention and manning initiatives, this accounted for 7.8 billion dollars.⁴³ The Army is reducing the active strength by 80,000 Soldiers during the course of the next five years and may increase that number further than the level now planned for, below the 490,000 threshold, as noted by General Odierno.⁴⁴

The Army has the largest number of personnel serving, and the associated costs consume the largest portion of the budget. The Army is the major component to the nation's ability to dominate during Unified Land Operations. The Army will continue to further reduce contractors, civilian and military personnel below the expected 490k to reduce the budget requirements. Reductions to the end strength restrict the flexibility of the Army to respond. This requires leaders to incorporate this manpower limitation as part of the decision making process in how well they can conduct full spectrum operations through their core competencies.

While simultaneously concluding operations in Iraq and balancing the fight in Afghanistan, the Army must make decisions on its remaining fiscal resources. There is no easy path. The allocation of the budget requires that priorities be addressed in conjunction with the Army's Modernization Plan 2012. This plan is centered on the modernization strategy published in April 2010. The modernization plan provides approximately 31.9 billion dollars during the FY12 budget request.⁴⁵ The Army has allocated 9.2 billion towards procurement in the next fiscal year of that total; 3.9 billion is focused on aviation capabilities and 1.6 billion on ground combat vehicles and the Stryker vehicle.⁴⁶ The Army will reduce the overall number of platforms and quantity of systems needed as the force is downsized. The acquisition process will also increase in time spreading out the duration of the costs. The need to reduce spending has and will continue, if sequestration occurs to cause the Army to save in areas where operating costs are the highest. This will directly affects its modernization program for the Abrams; Bradley, Field Artillery, Warfighting Information Network, and required intelligence platforms to highlight just a few.⁴⁷ The Army will not have enough forces to do everything required for CAM and WAS nor will they have every required system.

One of the possible unintended consequences is the ability of the BCTs to be fully capable of WAS missions. The Army currently comprises 73 BCTs, 45 Active and 28 Reserve component. The Infantry Brigade Combat Teams (IBCT) comprise 40 of the 73 total BCTs, approximately 55% percent of the total force.⁴⁸ BCTs will require funding based on their mission essential task list (METL) including both CAM and WAS tasks, in order to train and equip the organization for success. The Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) highlighted in TRADOC PAM 525-3-6 that in the case of IBCTs,

these organizations lack the mobility requirement within their current structure to conduct WAS missions.⁴⁹ While it notes mobility specifically, there are other nested components that require consideration. Associated with increased mobility (vehicles) comes the need for assigned communications platforms, Blue Force Trackers (FBCB2) for vehicles and assigned weapons systems for each vehicle to highlight just a few shortages necessary to make BCTs fully capable. Reduced funding in procurement directly affects the Army's ability to replace or provided this equipment. With the addition of the aforementioned systems, Army units would also incur increased maintenance costs, fuel costs, ammunition for qualification and training costs. These units also need the equipment to train with prior to being asked to conduct the mission assigned. Budget constraints impact where to focus modernization, the quantity available, which directly affects your capabilities, and in turn, influences the decision making process.

The final area concerns required operation and maintenance costs for the future force structure. The conflict in Afghanistan is ongoing, and the final combat troops left Iraq at the end of December 2011. One of the possible consequences of future sequestration reductions is the discontinuing of OCO funding. As both of these conflicts conclude, the requirement to replace and repair equipment is a residual cost that impacts the monetary resources available to the Army. The loss of OCO funds will require the Army to reallocate already reduced resources to fix, replace, and repair worn out equipment coming back from both locations. This will impact the current planned allocations in both the Organizational Maintenance Activity and procurement funding for future requirements.

What does all of this mean for strategy? We began this discussion with the observation that when resources are tight, they exert a more powerful influence on strategy. That story is playing out now. Given the dynamics of the resource allocation process discussed above, the Army is likely to choose to focus its operations towards CAM capabilities and force structure. The Army's ability to sustain capabilities inherent in Human Terrain Teams (HTT), reconstruction teams, reduced security force assistance headquarters similar to Multi-National Security Transitional Command –Iraq (MNSTC-I) or NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan (NTM-A) both heavily U.S. manned, Joint IED Defeat Organization (JIEDDO) and other enablers will be greatly reduced or eliminated all together. If the required functions necessary for WAS operations are not ready, can the Army efficiently conduct WAS operations? There probably will not be a technological advance that completely eliminates the need for some type of movement and maneuver, stability operations and nation building in the near future.⁵⁰

If you operate in a monetarily constrained environment, your ability to do everything and do it well is impaired. General Peter Chiarelli, former Vice Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, in a statement before the subcommittee on readiness for the armed services, said:

Once we break the 450 billion threshold, our ability to meet our national security objectives and effectively protect our country against all threat or contingencies would be appreciably and increasingly undermined.....As Secretary of Defense, Leon Panetta said while testifying.....The nearly 500 billion in defense cuts already imposed are taking us to the edge.⁵¹

The release by senior leadership of this new defense strategic guidance contains a host of challenges for each of the services. With the reduction of defense budgets, decrease in personnel end strength, and the challenge to maintain a timely acquisition

and modernization process, the assumption that we resource the strategy looks dubious. Mission capabilities require prioritization. The Army will need to analyze its capabilities based on financial reductions becoming an autonomous influencer that directly affects what the institution can and cannot do to accomplish its mission of decisive action in support of military and national strategy. These decisions will not be based on the resources required to implement the strategy. Resources the Army receives will dictate the level of support to the desired strategy.

A Better Path? Seeking Dynamic Capabilities

The military has a terrible record for discerning the future. The failings in our assessment of risk make the process of strategic forecasting even more challenging. Understanding that the Army's future OE will be uncertain and ambiguous, that decisions on prioritization between CAM and WAS will occur. Knowing the Army will be confronted by budget reductions, manpower draw-downs, and training and resource challenges, what will increase (or at least maintain) the Army's capabilities? The Army needs to shorten the time required to adapt to future conflicts. The military needs to expand, create new capabilities and rapidly scale up in other areas. To counterbalance these challenges, the Army will need to leverage dynamic capabilities that make it a more adaptable and flexible force. In essence, it needs to learn to learn. In this section, we explore three areas where dynamic capabilities are particularly crucial: materiel, training, and doctrine.

Strategic uncertainty means that the key systems for a given fight are not well-understood in advance. Thus, the military needs an acquisitions system that accommodates new requirements from the OE and provides solutions rapidly and efficiently. Needless to say, this is a tall order. But we have seen some successes in the

system (or, as the case may be, despite the system). An example of the Army's application of dynamic capabilities is responsiveness to an unknown operational need through the acquisition system. This is illustrated in the Army's need for a more enhanced and survivable vehicle in Iraq and Afghanistan. As the counterinsurgency grew, the use of IED's and later more destructive Explosively-Formed Penetrations (EFP's) became the weapons of choice. The Army encountered over 81,000 IED attacks in Iraq alone between 2003 and the fall of 2007. These types of attacks were responsible for approximately 70% of U.S. casualties.⁵² IED attacks in early 2004 ranged from 500-1000 incidents per month and peaked in 2007 with several months averaging approximately 3,500 attacks.⁵³

In response to IED attacks, the Joint Service Mine-Resistant Ambush Protection (MRAP) vehicle program started in November 2006. The initial request was for bids on approximately 4,000 vehicles. By January 2007, a fixed price award had been issued to multiple contractors to provide these vehicles. This was an amazing feat for an acquisition cycle that normally operates in years was now responding in months on an immediate operational need.⁵⁴ In the summer of 2007, Army leadership decided to maximize the protection provided to soldiers by requesting approximately 17,000 MRAP vehicles. An MRAP Task Force was established to speed production and fielding to organizations. The Task Force, beginning in July of 2007, issued a proposal for MRAP II competition, with vehicles submitted by September for testing and further production orders starting in January of 2008.⁵⁵ This again transformed a lengthy procurement system from a cycle of years to just months in duration.

The Army is looking towards a future that is uncertain, ambiguous and complex will not be able to procure and equip a ready force for every contingency. The military will also not have years of lead time to develop necessary capabilities. The service must have a ready system to respond when the OE around you is not what was expected, is in flux, and you need to adapt to it. The ability to leverage this dynamic capacity will allow the Army to quickly enter, and adapt to the environment, and procure the systems necessary to achieve mission success.

Another area where dynamic capabilities must be developed is in modifying or filling future doctrinal gaps. Part of the Army's doctrine after WWII focused on counter guerrilla operations, rather than defeating an entire insurgency. The Army's doctrine of Counter Insurgency Operation (COIN) had its origins in field manuals (FM's), like FM 31-20, Operations against Guerrilla Forces (1951). The Army revised its doctrinal approach after Vietnam by separating COIN into two focus areas. The first split from more conventional conflicts to Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict found its direction from FM 100-20 (1990). Predominantly light infantry organizations held responsibility during low intensity conflicts. The second avenue was through FM 90-8, Counter-Guerrilla Operations (1986).⁵⁶ These doctrinal concepts remained unchanged as the Army entered into counter-insurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

After the insurgency in Iraq intensified, the Army and Marines realized the existing doctrinal principles and guidelines were antiquated for the OE they operated within. The conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq were uniquely contextual and had their own distinct challenges. The Army doctrine based on experiences in Vietnam was not suited for fighting remnants of the Saddam regime, Taliban and Islamic extremists. Services

required a new doctrine to help them identify the themes and elements of a modern counter-insurgency campaign.⁵⁷ The Army's ability to identify this doctrinal gap and within 12 months of counter insurgency operations in Iraq produce an interim published document FMI 3-07.22, Counter Insurgency Operations, illustrates dynamic capability. This document incorporated some existing doctrine, lessons learned from ongoing operations, common principles, and characteristics of counterinsurgency operations, to establish the foundation.⁵⁸ An interim doctrine was updated and overseen by Lieutenant General David Petraeus during his command of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center. The results of his staff's work were the publication of a new counterinsurgency doctrinal manual, in December of 2006. Most of the work on this manual did not occur until 2005, after Petraeus' arrival to Leavenworth. In approximately one year, this doctrine filled the identified gap, while the military was still actively fighting two insurgencies simultaneously. These two timelines for the interim and final doctrinal documents highlight the Army's ability to learn quickly, adapt its operational and tactical methods and grow as a learning organization. Yet in future conflicts we ought not rest our hopes that another leader like Petraeus will have the perspective and political will to drive such changes. We must invest in dynamic capabilities in doctrine development that do not depend on an "entrepreneur," but emerge from the resources of the institution itself.

The third key area of dynamic capabilities is training. The premier training facilities for the Army reside in three locations: the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) at Fort Polk, Louisiana, the National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, California, and the Joint Maneuver Readiness Center (JMRC) in Hohenfels, Germany. Prior to 2004, training at Army home stations and these premier collective training

centers focused on force on force exercises founded in CAM— missions centered on Reception, Staging, Onward movement and Integration (RSOI), attack, defend, movement to contact, and Military Operations in an Urban Terrain (MOUT). The unit commander, taking into consideration the training center location, determined which operations would occur during the training exercise.⁵⁹ Exercise rotations then provided a realistic, stressful training environment approximating actual combat. The training rotation included some limited guerrilla or insurgency activity, but virtually no interagency/multinational operations, or in-depth stability operations.

The OE in Afghanistan and Iraq left a number of military organizations unprepared to operate in this environment. During this time, many commanders and senior leaders recognized the need to refocus the training centers abilities to replicate the OE confronting the Army and the Marine Corps. Starting in late 2003, (within one year of initial operations in Iraq), training centers undertook the challenge to provide a more realistic environment for units and their soldiers preparing to deploy. To address shortcomings at the NTC, the faculty created cave complexes, initiated work on its villages, hired Arab-American role players, dressed opposing forces in native civilian garb, built forward operating bases (FOBs) and contingency operating bases (COBs) within the training areas.⁶⁰ Similar changes occurred at JRTC, where 18 villages were constructed, including Arab speaking role players. Department of State (DoS) interactions, PRTs and joint patrols became the norm. Additionally, the JMRC allowed participating units and soldiers training to develop and enhance the necessary collective and individual skills required using similar techniques and resources.⁶¹

Rapid changes in training allowed the Army to deploy units that were better prepared, organized, and properly equipped to execute the complex operations they would be asked to perform. Furthermore, this ability to quickly transition pre-deployment training was responsible for enhancing commanders and staffs cognitive abilities; the way they think, visualize and creatively solve problems, which lead to more successful operational execution in theater.

The military's ability to develop this capability and significantly redirect collective training greatly contributes to the Army's success. The secondary effects of this ability are training opportunities that occur at home station in preparation for unit collective training at the readiness centers. These enhanced skills are illustrated through training in Key Leader Engagement (KLE) techniques, cultural training, rules of engagement and information operations. Some smaller unit training regarding partnered patrols, dealing with civilian on the battlefield, and security force assistance preparation, also display the adaptive nature of the Army's training abilities.

Yet these achievements cost money. They cost time. They required the dedication of thousands of personnel over several years. Some senior leaders call this "investing in the schoolhouse." It is how George Marshall prepared the Army for the coming war in Europe, despite extremely tight budgets.⁶² Marshall invested in the part of the Army that would be able to train and develop a conscript force for the complexities of modern warfare. He built a cadre of officers who were masters of the operational art, but who were also dedicated to instilling that mastery in others. In many respects, this is the challenge we face today.

Conclusion

The current strategic emphasis in the Pacific theater will define, through Air Force and Naval assets, the means by which the DoD executes support of the Defense Strategy as an element of national power. The Army is the major bill-payer, due to continued reductions to budgets, military end strength, longer acquisition and procurement timelines, and through assuming increased risk. How much of each of these changes the Army can accept without sacrificing readiness is further affected by a variety of biases, assumptions and assessment of risk that are intertwined in the decision making process. There are more unknowns than known, our track record in gauging the future is poor, and we will not have it right when the conflict starts.

The Military does not choose the wars we enter into. The Army is responsive to its civilian leaders, the policies established, and decisions they make. The Army cannot predict in 6 to 12 years (2018-2024) who that leader will be, the strategic policies implemented, and where they will commit the military. What complicates this further is that the Army requests resources to fulfill the directed strategy, but it cannot predict future strategy. Finally, the military has to be able to learn and adapt, but will only do so to the degree we are forced to and when we must.

The U.S. Military's success will hinge on the ability of which dynamic capabilities can be scaled up quickly and those that cannot. The Army will not develop the full context until they are actually engaged in the OE. Therefore, the Military must invest in learning and leveraging dynamic capabilities to remain pliable in future environments. Doing so will help identify additional dynamic capabilities and create greater adaptability and flexibility in a system centered on processes. The Military's' ability to learn, grow

and adapt during a time of conflict through dynamic capabilities will set the conditions to achieve success.

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